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SUBJECT: CHADIAN OPPOSITION LEADER FLOATS IDEAS FOR DIALOGUE

REF: A. A) N'DJAMENA 989

[B. B\) N'DJAMENA 487](#)

[C. C\) PARIS 5106](#)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Southern Muslim opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo told Ambassador that he is floating ideas with President Deby, the French and leaders of Chad,s political and armed opposition for a dialogue that could lead to comprehensive internal and regional peace. More flexible than the proposal proffered by the opposition in July, the approach would not require President Deby to relinquish executive authority. Kebzabo said that his ideas are resonating among GOC, rebel and opposition leaders and that recent Chadian military successes increase the prospect of President Deby agreeing to meaningful dialogue. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ambassador met December 13 with southern Muslim leader, Saleh Kebzabo, Chairman of the opposition National Union for Development and Renewal (UNDR) and member of the CPDC (Coordination of the Political Parties for the Defense of the Constitution), a coalition of some twenty legal opposition parties that boycotted the May 2006 elections.

[1](#)3. (SBU) A supporter of Deby during his first term, when he served as foreign minister (1996-97) and subsequently held the public works/transportation and then mines/energy/oil portfolios, Kebzabo is currently an opposition party leader and member of parliament. He told the ambassador December 13 that he, along with fellow opposition leader Jean Alingue (URD), is currently floating ideas with Deby, the French and leaders of the political and armed opposition for an approach that could achieve comprehensive peace. He described a proposal that would include bordering countries and a supervisory role for the EU and/or other credible international players in a dialogue designed to address both the internal and regional dynamics of conflict.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Kebzabo said that were the dialogue to lead to political transparency and fair legislative elections in 2008, President Deby could complete his third term and in fact run for a fourth term as long as the playing field was leveled.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Kebzabo insisted that the initiative was purely his and Alingue,s)- not a &CPDC thing8 -- and that their ideas were resonating among the key players they were cultivating. He argued that Deby would be more likely to engage in the process if he were more secure in his own position. In this context, he suggested that if the reported recent military successes of the Chadian army in the east proved to put the rebels at bay, Deby might be willing to engage in meaningful dialogue.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Comment: Other CPDC members have complained that President Deby is seeking to divide the opposition by engaging prominent CPDC members individually. Kebzabo,s thinking certainly appears to be more flexible with regard to

President Deby,s role in a peaceful transition than the approach proffered by the CPDC last July (Ref. A), which called as conditions for dialogue a significant reduction of executive authority and explicit presidential acknowledgment of a crisis requiring wide-ranging political, economic and social reform. Kebzabo is ahead of his colleagues in the political opposition in his efforts at exploring a path to democratic reform. The problem now is that, with violent combat still raging in eastern Chad, neither President Deby nor his armed opponents appear open to this initiative.

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